

**Nuclear Waste Program****January 2013**

## MTCA Study Deadline Extension

The Washington State Department of Ecology wants to update you on work being done by U.S. Ecology, Inc., under the *Model Toxics Control Act* (MTCA). We have changed the schedule in the Agreed Order and now expect the feasibility study to be complete in 2013.

### Site Background

US Ecology, Inc., operates a commercial disposal facility for low-level radioactive waste (LLRW). The facility is 23 miles north of Richland, near the center of the Hanford Site in south-central Washington. The Washington Department of Health licenses the facility and regulates its operation and closure.

The facility has operated since 1965, and is the only facility in Washington that accepts commercial LLRW. (LLRW is waste such as trash, clothing, tools, hardware, and equipment that has been contaminated by radioactive substances.)

In the 1960s and 1970s, the facility also disposed of what would now be defined as hazardous and mixed (both radioactive and chemically hazardous) waste. In 1999, US Ecology, Inc., reported hazardous substances in soil, soil gases, and groundwater at levels that triggered a remedial action under MTCA.

### MTCA remedial action

In 2006, the Department of Ecology and US Ecology, Inc., signed an Agreed Order requiring US Ecology, Inc., to conduct a remedial investigation and a feasibility study for cleanup of the MTCA site at the facility. (The Department of Ecology's authority at the facility is limited to the cleanup of the MTCA site.)

US Ecology, Inc., submitted the remedial investigation report in 2010. We accepted the remedial investigation report, but it is not final until the public has reviewed and commented on it.

### New schedule for feasibility study

US Ecology, Inc., is now conducting a feasibility study to help choose a cleanup action to address the hazardous substance releases from chemical wastes disposed in the 1960s and 1970s. The schedule in the MTCA Agreed Order required US Ecology, Inc., to complete the feasibility study by 2010.

#### WHY IT MATTERS

The site disposes wastes that remain harmful far into the future. The measures we take must protect human health and the environment today and in the future.

#### US Ecology, Inc.

**Facility Site ID #: 311****Cleanup Site ID#: 160**

#### Contact

Robin Varljen  
WA Department of Ecology  
Nuclear Waste Program  
3100 Port of Benton Boulevard  
Richland, WA 99354  
(509) 372-7930  
USEcology@ecy.wa.gov

#### Document Review Locations

Department of Ecology Nuclear  
Waste Program  
3100 Port of Benton Boulevard  
Richland, WA 99354  
(509) 372-7920  
(Please phone for an appointment.)  
[http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/nwp/llrw/llrw.htm#US\\_Ecology](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/nwp/llrw/llrw.htm#US_Ecology)

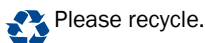
#### Special Accommodations

If you need this publication in an alternative format, call 509-372-7950.

Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with speech disability, call 877-833-6341.



Nuclear Waste Program  
3100 Port of Benton Blvd  
Richland, WA 99354



*(Continued from page 1.)*

We have revised the schedule for the feasibility study. We also are requiring US Ecology, Inc., to resume soil vapor sampling, which was part of the remedial investigation. We now expect the feasibility study to be completed in 2013.

When the feasibility study is finished, we will issue a draft Cleanup Action Plan. The remedial investigation, feasibility study, and plan will have a comment period together.

### **What is an Agreed Order?**

An Agreed Order is a legal document between the Department of Ecology and the owners and operators of a site. Its purpose is to protect human health and the environment. It ensures that cleanup happens in a timely manner and according to Washington State's cleanup law, the *Model Toxics Control Act*.

The Agreed Order describes the studies that the site owners agree to perform on the site. It covers the following studies and documents:

- **Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS)** - Explains the work needed to look for and analyze contamination in soil, groundwater, and sediments.
- **RI/FS Report** - Presents the results of the study and proposes alternatives for cleanup actions.
- **Draft Cleanup Action Plan (CAP)** - Uses information in the RI/FS to identify a preferred cleanup action and schedule.

Find the changes to the [Agreed Order](#), and the [draft Remedial Investigation report](#), on Ecology's Nuclear Waste Program [website](#) (see page 1 for full web address).